

So why are we here talking about requiring this administration to do something? Why don't you think about the history. When they could have demanded and relied on accurate information instead of manipulated intelligence, they made a willful choice not to do that. They were wrong. Instead, they sacrificed American credibility at home and abroad. The result of that is the "We are all Americans now" was squandered. It disappeared.

Ask any American citizen who travels abroad now how comfortable they feel as they travel. Ask any American businessman what happens to them when they travel in other parts of the world.

When this administration could have given the inspectors additional time to discover whether Saddam Hussein actually had weapons of mass destruction, when they could have taken time to exhaust the patience of our own allies and hold them accountable to the U.N. resolutions, instead they just broke off and said, OK, you go your way, we will go ours, and they exposed America to greater cost and greater sacrifice.

When they could have paid attention to Ambassador Wilson's report, they chose not to. And they were wrong. Instead, they attacked him and they attacked his wife to justify attacking Iraq.

But the mistakes were not limited to that decision to invade. They mounted, one upon the other. When they could have listened to General Shinseki and put in enough troops to maintain order, they chose not to. When they could have listened to Larry Lindsey and others who said it is going to cost \$200 billion, they not only chose not to listen, they fired him. They were wrong.

When they could have learned from George Herbert Walker Bush, Jim Baker and General Scowcroft and built a genuine world coalition, they chose not to. And they were wrong.

When they could have implemented a detailed State Department plan for reconstructing post-Saddam Iraq, they chose not to. And they were wrong.

When they could have protected American forces by guarding Saddam Hussein's ammo dumps where there were weapons of individual destruction, they exposed our young men and women to the ammo that now maims and kills them because they chose not to act. And they were wrong.

When they could have imposed immediate order and structure in Baghdad after the fall of Saddam Hussein, Secretary Rumsfeld shrugged his shoulders and said, "Baghdad was safer than Washington, DC," and he chose not to act, he was wrong.

When the administration could have kept an Iraqi Army selectively intact, they chose not to. And they were wrong.

When they could have kept an entire civil structure functioning to deliver basic services to Iraqi citizens, guess

what. They chose not to. And they were wrong, and we are paying the price today.

They could have accepted the offers of the United Nations and individual countries to provide on-the-ground peacekeepers and reconstruction. Guess what. In their arrogance about doing it alone, they chose not to, and so we are alone. They were wrong.

When they should have leveled with the American people that the insurgency had grown, they chose not to. Vice President CHENEY even absurdly claimed that the insurgency was in its last throes, and he repeated that again just a few days ago. He was wrong.

Now, after all these mistakes, the administration likes to accuse anyone who proposes a better course of wanting to cut and run. Well, Mr. President, we are in trouble today because of the policy of cut-and-run—cutting and running from common sense, cutting and running from history, cutting and running from cultural realities, cutting and running from the truth, cutting and running from the best advice of our military. And we are paying a huge price for that today.

Mr. President, every single one of us is determined to win the war on terror. But we have to ask ourselves some tough questions about where we find ourselves today. I wonder, as we are told by a lot of people that—I think the President, just yesterday or the day before, said it was important to have Members of the U.S. Congress who will not wave the white flag of surrender in the war on terror.

I think the President of the United States ought to stop acting as "Campaigner in Chief" and start being Commander in Chief and start bringing the Congress together and the Nation together around a real policy.

I don't know anybody waving a white flag. We are debating whether or not there is a better way to win the war on terror.

I respectfully say to my colleagues, if we don't begin to pay attention, instead of over \$2 billion every couple of days—every 2 days, I think; it is about \$8 billion a week; 8 billion bucks a week—instead of \$8 billion a week going to Iraq, we could be investing and working on a greater Middle Eastern initiative, working on economic development, working on schools, working on children's issues, working on a future with respect to future terrorists.

The fact is, we are not going to succeed at this if all we do is go out there and alienate people. I have heard from soldiers over the last weekend. I was with three medics who have come back, and they are all against the war, those three medics. They are out there in America right now talking to people about why they are against the war. They said: When you go into a house at night, and you are holding guns, and you are scaring people in that house, and you leave that house, they don't like you. You are not winning their hearts and minds.

I cannot tell you how familiar that is to the same experience we saw and went through years ago in hamlets throughout Southeast Asia. It just does not work the way they are doing it.

We could ask the question, legitimately: How many lives have been lost because of the ineptitude of this strategy? How many lives have been lost? And how many people have been maimed and wounded because we did not provide the body armor to our troops? You want to talk about patriotism? How many troops were killed or wounded by the shells and the weapons that came from the ammo dumps that we were not smart enough to protect? How many lives have been lost and how many limbs have been amputated because there were not enough troops in the beginning in order to provide people with the support and safety and the control of the country? How much bigger and more dangerous is al-Qaida today because we outsourced the job of capturing him at Tora Bora to Afghans instead of using the First Marines or the 10th Mountain Division or even the SEALs who were there?

We are where we are today in this war on terror because of misjudgments. And I believe those misjudgments continue.

How many times have we heard that we are turning the corner or that this is a moment of turning the corner, and yet momentum was lost? Momentum was lost after the elections. Momentum was lost after the passage of the Constitution. Momentum was lost in the last months while we waited and waited and waited for Iraqi politicians to stop playing around and form a government.

I do not think our soldiers deserve that interim period, personally. And the question now is, how do you best protect our troops? How do you best secure our objectives? How do you best deal with the problem of an Iraq where Iraqis need to defend their own rights and interests?

Americans cannot do it for them. Yes, we can provide backup. Yes, we can provide insurance against a total implosion. Yes, we can provide security with respect to the efforts to go after al-Qaida. And our amendment contemplates all of that. But it also contemplates a transition based on experience.

The Iraqis needed a deadline for the transfer of authority to the Provisional Government. The Iraqis needed a deadline for the Constitution. They needed a deadline for their elections. They needed a deadline for their own formation of a government. They even have a self-imposed deadline for the transition of the Constitution in these next months.

Why then, when the Iraqis themselves are saying they can take over their security, when the Iraqi Government itself says withdrawing American troops would be helpful, would we not coordinate with the Iraqi Government a drawdown that makes it clear that we are standing them up?